

IN THE CLAIMS:

The present claims are as follows:

1. (Previously Presented) A method for enabling the online determination of end-to-end costs during an online ascending or reverse auction, said method comprising:

 maintaining an online database of costs associated with each significant cost element in order to compute said end-to-end costs for goods and services offered by an offerer and bid upon by a bidder,

 receiving a first online bid to buy or sell said offered goods and services from a first bidder,

 updating said online database of costs related to said first online bid and calculating a first bid's end-to-end costs related to said first online bid,

 receiving a second online bid to buy or sell said offered goods and services from a second bidder,

 updating said online database of costs related to said second online bid and calculating a second bid's end-to-end costs related to said second online bid,

 if, in an ascending auction, said second bid's end-to-end costs result in a higher payout to said offerer than said first bid's end-to-end costs, then accepting said second bid, else accepting said first bid, and

 if, in a reverse auction, said second bid's end-to-end costs result in a higher cost to said offerer than said first bid's end-to-end costs, then accepting said first bid, else accepting said second bid,

 wherein said method is implemented by an online intermediary providing facilities as a service free of charge.

2. (Canceled).

3. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said each significant cost element includes any of shipping and handling costs, logistics management costs, taxes, finance costs, commissions, duties, insurance, regulatory- and statutory-related costs, and information costs.

4. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein databases, which provide information for updating said online database of costs, are associated with said offerer, said bidder, or by a third party.

5-7. (Canceled).

8. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, applied to online ascending auctions between an offerer and at least two bidders.

9. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, applied to online reverse auctions between an offerer and at least two bidders.

10-12. (Canceled).

13. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 8, wherein a minimum required qualifying bid amount is communicated to a potential bidder in response to a request for information about current status of the auction.

14. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 9, wherein a maximum allowable offer amount is communicated to a potential bidder in response to a request for information about current status of the reverse auction.

15. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein updated offers are shown to potential bidders after online computation of said end-to-end costs.

16-18. (Canceled).

19. (Previously Presented) A system for enabling the online determination of end-to-end costs during an online ascending or reverse auction, said method comprising:

means for maintaining an online database of costs associated with each significant cost element in order to compute said end-to-end costs for goods and services offered by an offerer and bid upon by a bidder,

means for receiving a first online bid to buy or sell said offered goods and services from a first bidder,

means for updating said online database of costs related to said first online bid and calculating a first bid's end-to-end costs related to said first online bid,

means for receiving a second online bid to buy or sell said offered goods and services from a second bidder,

means for updating said online database of costs related to said second online bid and calculating a second bid's end-to-end costs related to said second online bid,

means for if, in an ascending auction, said second bid's end-to-end costs result in a higher payout to said offerer than said first bid's end-to-end costs, then accepting said second bid, else accepting said first bid, and

means for if, in a reverse auction, said second bid's end-to-end costs result in a higher cost to said offerer than said first bid's end-to-end costs, then accepting said first bid, else accepting said second bid,

wherein said method is implemented by an online intermediary providing facilities as a service free of charge.

20. (Canceled).

21. (Previously Presented) The system as claimed in claim 19, wherein said each significant cost element includes any of shipping and handling costs, logistics management costs, taxes,

finance costs, commissions, duties, insurance, regulatory- and statutory-related costs, and information costs.

22. (Previously Presented) The system as claimed in claim 19, wherein databases, which provide information for updating said online database of costs, are associated with said offerer, said bidder, or by a third party.

23-25. (Canceled).

26. (Previously Presented) The system as claimed in claim 1, used for online ascending auctions between an offerer and at least two bidders.

27. (Previously Presented) The system as claimed in claim 1, used for online reverse auctions between an offerer and at least two bidders.

28-30. (Canceled).

31. (Previously Presented) The system as claimed in claim 26, including means for communicating a minimum required qualifying bid amount to a potential bidder in response to request for information about current status of the auction.

32. (Previously Presented) The system as claimed in claim 27, including means for communicating a maximum allowable offer amount to a potential bidder in response to request for information about current status of the reverse auction.

33. (Previously Presented) The system as claimed in claim 1, including means for showing updated offers to potential bidders after online computation of said end-to-end costs.

34-36. (Canceled).

37. (Previously Presented) A storage device readable by machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by said machine to perform a method for enabling the online determination of end-to-end costs during an online ascending or reverse auction, said method comprising:

maintaining an online database of costs associated with each significant cost element in order to compute said end-to-end costs for goods and services offered by an offerer and bid upon by a bidder,

receiving a first online bid to buy or sell said offered goods and services from a first bidder,

updating said online database of costs related to said first online bid and calculating a first bid's end-to-end costs related to said first online bid,

receiving a second online bid to buy or sell said offered goods and services from a second bidder,

updating said online database of costs related to said second online bid and calculating a second bid's end-to-end costs related to said second online bid,

if, in an ascending auction, said second bid's end-to-end costs result in a higher payout to said offerer than said first bid's end-to-end costs, then accepting said second bid, else accepting said first bid, and

if, in a reverse auction, said second bid's end-to-end costs result in a higher cost to said offerer than said first bid's end-to-end costs, then accepting said first bid, else accepting said second bid,

wherein said method is implemented by an online intermediary providing facilities as a service free of charge.

38. (Canceled).

39. (Previously Presented) The program storage device as claimed in claim 37, wherein said each significant cost element includes any of shipping and handling costs, logistics management

costs, taxes, finance costs, commissions, duties, insurance, regulatory- and statutory-related costs, and information costs.

40. (Previously Presented) The program storage device as claimed in claim 37, wherein databases, which provide information for updating said online database of costs, are associated with said offerer, said bidder, or by a third party.

41-43. (Canceled).

44. (Previously Presented) The program storage device as claimed in claim 37, configured for online ascending auctions between an offerer and at least two bidders.

45. (Previously Presented) The program storage device as claimed in claim 37, configured for online reverse auctions between an offerer and at least two bidders.

46-48. (Canceled).

49. (Previously Presented) The program storage device as claimed in claim 44 including means for communicating a minimum required qualifying bid amount to a potential bidder in response to a request for information about current status of the auction.

50. (Previously Presented) The program storage device as claimed in claim 45 including means for communicating a maximum allowable offer amount to a potential bidder in response to a request for information about current status of the reverse auction.

51. (Previously Presented) The program storage device as claimed in claim 37, wherein updated offers are shown to potential bidders after online computation of said end-to-end costs.

52-54. (Canceled).